

Congressman Larson recently held a telephone town hall with constituents of Connecticut's First Congressional District to discuss health care reform.

He discussed the [America's Affordable Health Choice Act of 2009](#), which would reduce health care costs, protect and increase consumers' choices, and guarantee access to quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

### Questions and Answers from the call

Listen to Congressman Larson's answer by clicking the play button below each question.

#### Insurance: Private versus Government Involvement

*Diana from Winsted:* I prefer to keep my private insurance rather than having it government controlled. I don't believe that should be the way to go.

#### Thank you, Congressman Larson

*Mel from Portland:* Congressman Larson, I wish to thank you for your hard work and I know you've really worked hard for us. I want to see health insurance for everybody; I really don't have a question. I just want to say thank you and keep up the good work.

#### Criticism of Medicare

*Tom from Bristol:* Thank you Congressman for having us together this evening, I want to say that I am vehemently opposed to a federal national health care plan. I don't believe the federal government has demonstrated the measure of confidence to set up such a thing.

Medicare is rife with fraud and abuse and this is something that from a regulatory stand-point government could have addressed long ago and has not. The veterans Administration has been since World War II a very poor service to America's finest and it should be a flagship of what our medical care could be in this country and it is far from it. A couple of months ago, there were several people that were infected with AIDS and hepatitis from unsterile needles in the Veterans Administration.

I heard on the radio just today that some 1200 veterans worldwide have been notified erroneously that they suffered from ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease. This is inexcusable. The third and final area is just learned by watching TV that apparently we are the soul custodians for health care for the Indians on the reservations and we have never taken care of that responsibility.

So before we even think about federal involvement in nationwide health care system, I think the government needs to show that it knows how to involve itself in the system at all.

### **Forced to use public option?**

*Mary from Wethersfield:* I had two things that I wanted you to address. The first thing you touched on a few minutes ago; there has been this person that I know that supposedly read through the whole 600 or 1000 page bill and she is convinced that it says in there somewhere that if you lose your health care from a private company that you will be forced to connect to the public auction and not to a private company.

Now I don't believe that this is true, but obviously this is a significant rumor that needs to be addressed. And the second thing that you would please touch on, one of the things that is being written about in a lot of publications that if these million Americans actually have health insurance and are able to access and those of us who have private insurance make use of accessing preventative programs, that we will actually cut the cost of healthcare because we will be doing things that make us healthy instead of the things that require us to obtain intervention with the more significant costly programs.

## Support for the public option

*Ron from Granby:* Congressman, I happen to be in support of a government plan just for the reasons you mentioned as a yardstick and it reminds me of the Tennessee Valley Authority when electricity was coming in.

My concern is that unless we have something [like] that as an alternative, we know that in the private industry billions of dollars are made in profits each year by not paying claims for people or not insuring people that are unhealthy.

I think its very important to have this option on the table that people can choose. I was hearing rumors that the president is backing off from that. Is that true?

## Costs of Healthcare Reform

*Jeff from Bloomfield:* In fact what President Obama said was true -- people who earn over \$50k are going to be taxed.

I would also make a suggestion. Since the bush tax cuts came into effect and really helped the top 1% of our country that they ought to bear the brunt of most of this. Not that and to answer the critics who were anointing the country and the people who don't have stock portfolios and work for wage labor and sometimes have three jobs or no job -- [they] have paid enough. Not only over the last 8 years, but in the end the climbing real income of wages... So I say that the people that have been the beneficiaries of the bush tax cut ought to pay most of this.

John, I would just like to say its a very great thing to hear my Representative say that it's a good

thing for the United States of America to want to join the 21st century and the rest of the western world in having health care for all.

## **Fixing Medicare and Medicaid**

*June from Granby:* Congressman, I had Connecticare insurance for many years when I was working. When I retired I was required to take Medicare and then purchase a supplement to go with it.

The supplement that I have has a \$500 deductible for medical expenses. Fortunately, I don't go anywhere near that amount. But, my question is, why can we not fix Medicare and Medicaid before we try and fix the rest of this system? It just seems to me that we are spending a lot of time talking about issues that need to have, we need to fix the things that are in place now.

I would also prefer to have my Connecticutcare back, but was not given the option. Also, the cost of Medicare, the supplement plus the deductibles are costing me what it would have cost me for Connecticare.

## **Ensuring an efficient health care system**

*George from South Windsor:* Congressman, thank you very kindly for taking my question.

As my grandfather used to say, as yours did, read and trust what you read, but cut the cards. Mine used to say, figures don't lie but liars figure. Now I'm calling anybody a liar, but honestly something is quite a bit wrong with this health care that is proposed.

First off we're talking about 47 million people, how do you dump that number of people into a system and expect there not to be long waits at special doctors' offices, except there not to be rationing, how do we we expect not to have a system similar to what Canada and Great Britain are experiencing. Looking as Massachusetts, now, of the 47 million, 10 million are illegal immigrants and I don't think my dime should be paying for their insurance. Another 10 million people who can afford insurance elect not to take it.

What I'm saying I guess is about 15% of the current population that's insured, why don't we look at a way to insure them, I mean, I'm not enamored with the health care system I currently have. And I think it does impair, but I don't think really think we should throw the baby out with the bathwater. How do we get that 15% of the population insured, and not totally dismantle the currently system we're currently enjoying?

### **Underlying Causes of Illness**

*Sandra from East Hartford:* Thank you for having this forum for us, Congressman.

My question is regarding things that really haven't been touched on yet. I'm concerned that once this initial round of legislation and aiming us all at this new solutions is accomplished that it's just going to go on the back burner and we are not going to continue to look for the underlying causes of our health as you said it's not a health care system that we have it's a sick system that we have.

When I was in industry for many years, one of the paradigms that emerged in the late 90's and early in this decade was to think outside the box and so far everything I hear being said is still inside the box. We are taking the system... We are messaging it the way it is and we are going to pump more money into the people who are getting it already.

When are we going to look at underlying themes like nutrition? There is a poll that was done at every medical institution, every medical school in the U.S. and it shows that nutrition isn't really a factor in doctors training and doctors want it and medical students want it--- it would cost the government nothing to mandate that doctors have to have- schools have to provide nutrition

training. Underlying things that would help everyone. Every single patient.

Are we going to look outside the box or are we only going to play inside the box?